

Robert Brent to George Washington, February 19, 1774, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM ROBERT BRENT, ESQ. ¹

AQUIA Feby: 19th 1774

SIR

I have to acknowledge the receipt of both your letters to Wm Brent Esqr & Self—That you have not recieved an answer sooner to your first, be kind enough to admit of ye following Apology. It was deliver'd to me by the Bearer on my way to Dumfries; As he had to proceed to Aquia, I desired him to stay till I came home; I met him early ye next Morning, on his return, fearful of being detained by ye. Weather, and expecting to find me in Dumfries. I ordered him to acquaint his Mistress, I propos'd sending ye following week a messenger with an Answer to your Letter, and intended to Fairfax January Court. The immediate severity and hardness of ye Weather prevented my compliance with either ye one, or ye other. Mr Wm Brent depended on my answering it.

Its with the greatest reluctance, I must still entreat your accepting the Trust and Qualifying under the Will. I am very sensible of ye Multiplicity of your business, and coul'd wish my situation was such, that I coul'd ease you of this. But for many reasons it Will be totally out of my power. Of This, Sir, I made my Aunt Sensible, the Last time I saw her. and begg'd she would appoint some one else, who woul'd have it in their power to Serve her more effectually, than I was sensible I could. Its true, amongst others, I principally recommended her to you on ye occasion. She declar'd that with pleasure she woul'd appoint you to ye trust, coul'd she be satisfied you woul'd accept of it. But did not care to do any thing in the matter, before you were consulted. It was on this Occasion I waited on you. I must acknowledge your then reluctancy in agreeing to have your name inserted, and was but too sensible of ye cogency of your reasons on ye Occasion—Indeed as matters has turn'd out, I could have wishd you had refus'd altogether, in that case, Another woul'd have been Appointed, who, tho I am convinc'd, woul'd not have Managed ye affairs better, than they'll be if undertaken by You, yet woul'd have more time and Leisure to attend to them. It gives me much uneasiness, that I should be any ways the cause of taking you from your family, or depriving you in any part of your recreation or pleasure. I flatter myself the matter will give you not any great trouble Its more than probable Mrs

Slaughter from this time will Live in a State of Seperation from her Husband. If that is ye case, the trust may be said in some measure to have ceas'd, as it does on her becoming a Widow.

I did intend up to Fairfax this Court: But the uncertainty of ye Magistrates sitting added to the deepness of ye Roads has caus'd me to defer til March, When I will most undoubtedly be up —

I am with the greatest respect Dr Sir — Yr. most Obt He Sert ROB BRENT

1 For the following information in regard to the direct ancestry of Robert Brent I am indebted to Robert Brent Mosher, Esq., of the Department of State, his great great-grandson. George Brent, son of George Brent and Marianna, daughter of Sir John Peyton Dunnington, in the Isle of Ely, came to Virginia in the seventeenth century, and settled at Woodstock, in the town of Aquia, in Stafford County. He married first the daughter of Captain William Green, and niece of Sir William Layton, and secondly the daughter of Lady Baltimore by her first husband Henry Sewell. Robert, third son of George Brent, of Woodstock, married Susannah, granddaughter of Florentin Seymour, governor of Bermuda. Their eldest son George married Catherine Tremingham, of Bermuda. Robert Brent, eldest son of George and Catherine (Tremingham) Brent, died in Stafford County, Virginia, in 1780. He was educated by the Jesuits at the College of St. Omer in the Netherlands. He married Anne, daughter of Daniel Carroll, and the sister of the archbishop. Robert Brent was on the committee of Stafford County in 1774. He owned the quarries at Aquia that later furnished the stone for the central part of the Capitol. His second son, Robert Brent, who married Mary, daughter of Notley Young, was the first mayor of the city of Washington, and also held, among other public trusts, the offices of Judge of the Orphans' Court, and Paymaster of the Army. The sister of Robert Brent married George Mason, of Gunston Hall.